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Physical activity investments that work - Get Scotland walking

Citation for published version:

Campbell, A, Calderwood, C, Hunter, G & Murray, A 2018, 'Physical activity investments that work - Get Scotland walking: A national walking strategy for Scotland', *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, vol. 52, no. 12, pp. 759-760. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2017-098776>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1136/bjsports-2017-098776](https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2017-098776)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

British Journal of Sports Medicine

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Bright Spots, Physical Activity Investments that Work

Get Scotland Walking- A National Walking Strategy for Scotland

Aileen Campbell¹ Catherine Calderwood² Graeme Hunter³ Dr Andrew Murray⁴

¹ Minister for Public Health and Sport. Scottish Government

² Chief Medical Officer for Scotland. Scottish Government.

³ Active Scotland. Scottish Government

⁴ Sport and Exercise. University of Edinburgh.

Corresponding author: Dr Andrew Murray, Sports and Exercise Medicine Consultant. Sport and Exercise, and Physical Activity for Health Research Centre, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland. Email docandrewmurray@gmail.com

Keywords: Physical activity, walking, public health, strategy.

Programme Card

Country/coverage. Scotland. National government led programme.

Target population. Five million plus persons of all ages in Scotland.

What modes/types/domains of physical activity does the program promote? The aim of this programme is to get more people in Scotland walking, more often.

Which of the 7 best investments the program addresses? This is a cross-sector programme impacting on each of the 7 best investments for physical activity.

What sectors does it involve?

- i) Communication and public education
- ii) Transport and the environment
- iii) Urban design and infrastructure
- iv) Health and social care
- v) Education
- vi) Community wide approaches
- vii) Sport and recreation

What is special about this program? A government led, cross-sectoral initiative that contributed to a 13% increase in population level recreational walking over a 6 year period, documented by a national health surveillance system.

Key contact Graeme Hunter. Policy Officer. Scottish Government- Active Scotland Division.
Graeme.Hunter@gov.scot

Programme website www.stepchangescot.scot

Twitter @stepchangescot
@ClydesdAileen
@CathCalderwood1

@docandrewmurray
@legacy2014scot
@PathsforAll

Background

The Scottish Government recognises that increasing physical activity is crucially important for the mental and physical health of our country. Big health gains come from getting inactive people more active, particularly in the outdoors. The argument is compelling, and our aim to get more people active, more often is clear.

The question we face in Scotland, and indeed worldwide is “how do we achieve this”. We recognise no single intervention will work for all, and that cross-sectoral action is needed at community, local, national and international level (1,2). We strongly believe that the simplest way for most of us to gain more physical activity is through walking more.

The Scottish Walking Strategy

Walking is a popular, accessible and effective way of getting people active. Walking is cheap, accessible and fun - almost everyone can do it. The benefits include happiness, social connectedness, physical health and longevity.

The Scottish Government aims to make Scotland a walking friendly nation. It wants a Scotland where everyone benefits from walking as part of their everyday journeys, enjoys walking in the outdoors and where places are well designed to encourage walking.

We published a [National Walking Strategy](#) in 2014 (3). The National Walking Strategy sits within the context of the [Active Scotland Outcomes Framework](#) (4) which describes the key outcomes desired for sport and physical activity in Scotland over the next ten years, the [National Planning Framework 3](#) (5) and the Long-term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030 (6).

The National Walking Strategy has three strategic aims for Scotland:

- Creation of a culture of walking
- Development of better walking environments
- Supporting easy, convenient independent mobility for everyone

The National Walking Strategy Action Plan was launched on March 3rd, 2016, along with a website (www.stepchangescot.scot) and supporting infographic. This Action Plan is a high-level plan that has been developed to assist in the delivery of the National Walking Strategy and lists objectives, outcomes and core indicators. It is managed and promoted by the charity Paths for All who also facilitate the associated Delivery Forum on behalf of the Scottish Government.

Program successes from across sectors

The walking strategy and action plan are part of successes across the sectors outlined in the “Best Investments That Work for Physical Activity” (2). We share some examples

- **Communication and public education-** www.stepchangescot.scot has secured massive public engagement, and sharing of infographics across social and digital media
- **Transport and the environment/ Urban design and infrastructure** A doubling of funding for active travel was announced in September 2017 by the First Minister of Scotland to prioritise walking and cycling, following discussions between Public Health and Transport colleagues.
- **Health and social care** Our partners at Ramblers Scotland, have established walking routes from all hospitals across pilot Health Boards. Teaching on physical activity has been established in all Scotland's medical schools.
- **Education.** The Daily Mile is an initiative where each child walks, runs or jogs a mile each day. An idea born in Scotland by a former head teacher, Elaine Wyllie. Scotland can now boast over 1000 schools taking part, our first college and university now participating and are now seeing take up of the initiative in the public and private sector workforce.
- **Community wide approaches** are being prioritised by the increased funding for active transport, while Paths for All and Ramblers Scotland offer community walks Scotland wide.
- **Sport and recreation** Scotland is the home of golf. Our golfers are encouraged to walk the course rather than riding carts while we work with the World Golf Foundation, the R+A, and the European Tour to encourage spectators to walk the course, gaining an average 11400 steps in the process (7).

We are seeing strong progress against the Strategy's overarching aim to create a culture where everyone walks more often. A strong endorsement of the National Walking Strategy is evidenced in the latest Scottish Household Survey, showing a rise in recreational walking. Recreational walking (for at least 30 minutes) has consistently been the most common type of physical activity in Scotland. Participation in recreational walking has risen from 54% in 2010 to 67% in 2016 according to the Scottish Household Survey (8), as shown in Figure 1.

Lessons Learned

While rates of walking are increasing in Scotland, we need to evaluate our programmes over a period of time, and evaluate successes, and where we need to improve. We have been inspired by visiting, and having visits from, world leaders who have been generous in sharing their knowledge and ideas that work. We look to continue learning and sharing.

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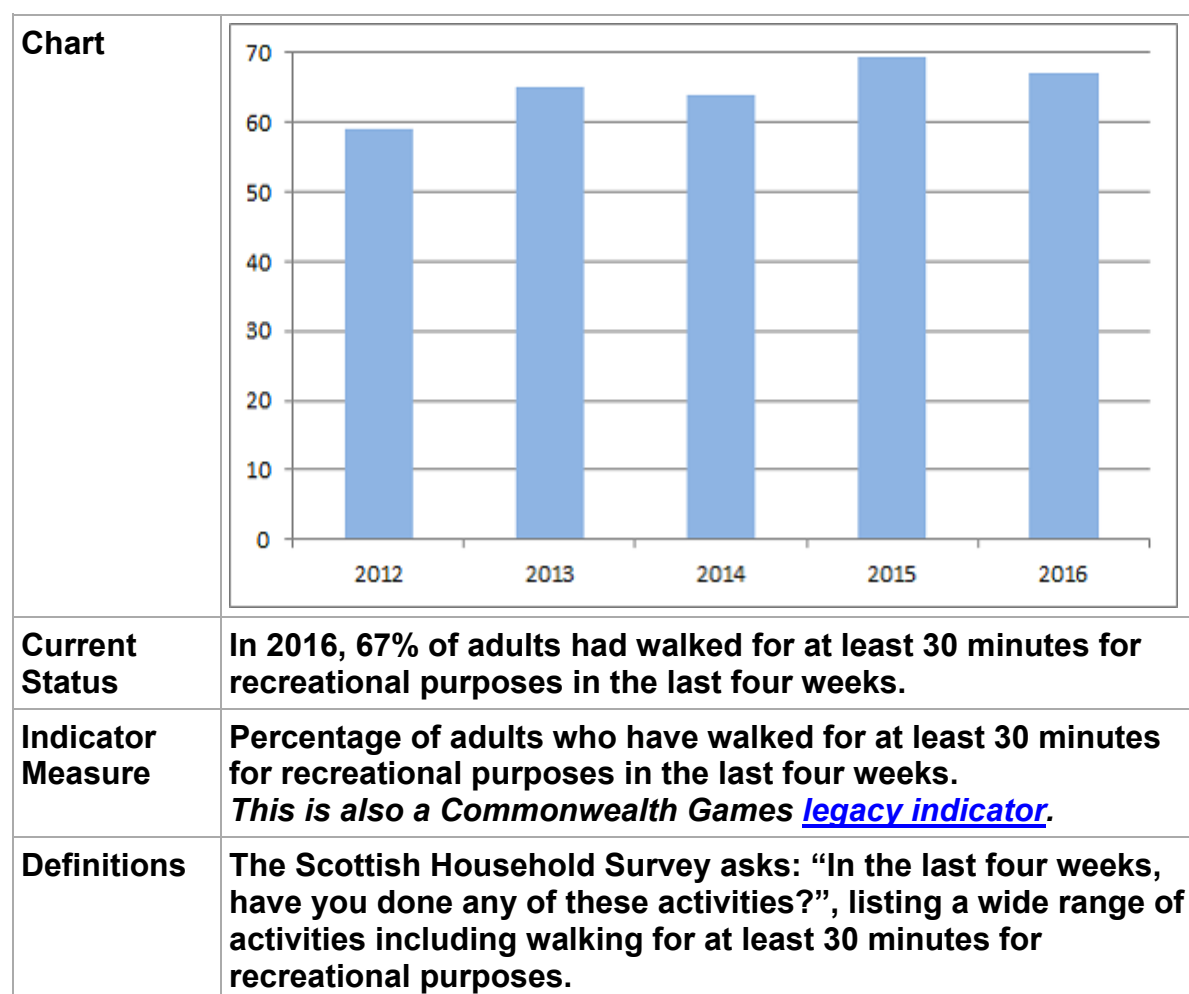
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Figure 1 Recreational Walking Participation in Adults in Scotland. Scottish Household Survey 2016

<http://www.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/partnerstories/Outcomes-Framework/More-Active/Recreational-Walking>

Recreational Walking Participation in Adults



How is Scotland doing?	The percentage of adults who walked for more than 30 minutes at a time for recreation in the last four weeks has increased since 2012, from 59% to 67%.
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Figure 2. Infographic. A Step Change for Scotland.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnSQTvh2OA0>